



Secretary of the Air Force
Office of Legislative Liaison

CONGRESSIONAL HEARING RESUME

106th Congress

Date: 9 March 2000

SUBJECT: Personnel Overview

COMMITTEE: Senate Armed Services
Subcommittee on Military Personnel

CHAIRMAN: The Honorable Tim Hutchinson (R-AK)

OTHER COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: Max Cleland, Rnkg Member (D-GA),
Charles Robb (D-VA), Jack Reed (D-RI)

WITNESSES: See Attached

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Date: 9 Mar 00

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Panel Members

Panel I

Association Directors

1. Mr. Joe Barnes, Fleet Reserve Assn.
2. Ms. Joyce Raezer, National Military Family Assn.
3. Mr. Steve Strobridge, TROA
4. Mr. Larry Rhea, NCOA
5. Mr. Marshall Hanson, Naval Reserve Assn.

Panel II

Senior Personnel Leadership, OSD & Service

1. Secretary Alphonso Maldon, Assistant Secretary of Defense, Force Management Policy
2. Secretary Henry, Assistant Secretary of the Army (Manpower and Reserve Affairs)
3. Secretary Carolyn H. Becraft, Assistant Secretary of the Navy (Manpower and Reserve Affairs)
4. Secretary Ruby B. DeMesme, Assistant Secretary of Air Force (Manpower, Reserve Affairs, Installations and Environment)
5. Lt Gen Donald Peterson, DP, USAF
6. LTG David Ohle, DCS PER, USA
7. VADM Norbert Ryan, CNP, USN
8. Lt Gen Jack Klimp, DCS MRA, USMC

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Subcommittee focused on personnel issues including military personnel policy for active duty and reserve components; civilian personnel policy, quality of life programs, and safety and domestic abuse programs. The meeting was very productive and the committee members were receptive to the suggestions from all our witnesses. Each panel was thanked for their outstanding service and for spending time before the committee.

The Subcommittee was called to order at 1335.

OPENING REMARKS

Chairman Hutchinson:

- Welcomed the witnesses before the committee and appreciated the witnesses taking time to come before the committee and for providing answers to their questions
- One area in the advanced questions and answers section provided by each Service concerned Mr. Hutchinson
- Overall, the Departments safety record looks good, but he's not sure it is getting the attention it should
 - The Departments loss rates would be unacceptable in public sector

Senator Cleland:

- Last year JCS sought help with the Triad, this year is the year of "Health Care"
- We've proposed a health care bill; the bill is not a silver bullet, but the first step in a bi-partisan approach to fixing the problem
- Recruiting and retention stands as a double-edged sword
- Increasing interest in modernizing the MGIB -- today's force is different from Korean/Vietnam
- The longer we put off people issues the longer it will take to catch up -- we are losing a generation of people that could be serving but never will because of our lack of action

Senator Robb:

- Shared a story about a soldier from VA that PCS'd approximately 10 times, deployed to 8 different locations in ~ 12 years. During a 8 year period of time he only spent 31/2 years w/his family -- he'd like to think this is not the norm, but somehow thinks it is more common than not
- Need to come to grips with what's causing instability for our military personnel

Senator Reed:

- No opening statement, but wanted to know if we are having the same problems recruiting our civilian force as we are having recruiting military force

WITNESS STATEMENTS

Comments from the Coalitions/Associations

- DoD has not implemented WIC overseas. Asked for Congress to enforce implementation a (expect QFR on this subject on status of implementation)
- Housing is top QoL for alliance--new rates are not compatible for some locations
- Support changes to Health Care
- Changes to MGIB needed for retention purposes
- Prospective recruits are comparing our benefit packages to civilian sector
- Reserve components is being asked to share more of the burden but not being compensated the same as the active force
- Support parity of benefits for Reserve component
- Support paid up annuity of SBP at 62
- Think the force and missions are mismatched--the force has been reduced to far

Mr. Maldon

- All the Services are working hard to recruit and retain the right people
- The AF is struggling but still hiring quality recruits
- The Marines are making it, but it's getting tougher
- First time ever we've committed \$ to TV advertising
- Services exceeding quality benchmark--taken many initiatives, expanded JROTC, 3.7% pay raise in '00, expanded BAH, etc.
- Mr. Maldon and each witness asked for relief from HQ reduction

Ms. DeMesme

- Our most valuable resource is our people -- we continue to put People First

KEY COMMENTS, QUESTIONS, AND ANSWERS

- **Sen Reed** asked if we are having problems recruiting civilians. **Ms. DeMesme** said we have been in a drawdown mode for the past 10 years. We've reduced our intern program and accessions. We've used VERA/VSIP to help drawdown the force, but now we need legislative authority (through VERA/VSIP) to help us shape the force that we have. We need the right compensation packages to attract new recruits. **Mr. Henry** said the recruiting problem has been compounded by the fear of job reductions (contracting out, RIFs, etc.). We need to convince people working for the federal government is still a good thing. The problem with our civilian force is on pace with the military, but it is not getting the same attention. **Mr. Maldon** asked for the authority to extend VERA through '05.
- **Sen Hutchinson** made a comment about last week's medical hearing. According to Dr. Bailey the recruiters are using 1990s recruiting brochure--promising health care for life. Are you sure this type of dated material is off the street? **Mr. Maldon** said we try very hard to keep the most up to date and accurate information on the street. What are the recruiters saying about the importance of health care on the young recruits? **Lt Gen Peterson** said 20% of our recruits say health care is important. Unfortunately our retirees are disillusioned by perceived broken promises and are influencing our new recruits. **Ms. Becraft** said it is not impacting Navy recruits because so many young people think they are "invincible at the age of 20"
- **Sen Cleland** talked about the limitations for women in certain career fields. He wanted to know if this effects promotion. **Lt Gen Peterson** stated the "AF is gender neutral". 99.4% of all career fields are open to women and they are promoted at or above their male counterparts. **Lt Gen Klimp**

said young women have a higher first term attrition rate, but do better after that. Females promote at a higher rate than male counterparts

- **Sen Robb** was interested PERSTEMPO management. **Ms. DeMesme** said we track our 120-day goal very closely and credit “a day away is a day away”. We are looking to bring stability and predictability to the force through AEF concept. **Lt Gen Ohle** said the Army has a task force to track this better. At the micro level the soldier will now see the number of TDY days on his LES. **Sen Robb** said we have to make a distinction between turbulence (family problems) and PERSTEMPO. **Mr. Maldon** talked about the problems the department is having decided on one definition for tempo.

Sen Cleland’s Closing Remarks:

Appreciated everyone’s time and expertise in addressing the challenges facing today’s military in recruiting and retention. Discussed the MGIB a bit more and talked about what a great service the military provides for the American people.

The hearing concluded at 1630.